

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-25 are pending with claims 4, 5, 7-10, 14, 15, 18-20, and 23-25 having been previously withdrawn from consideration based on applicant's election of Species II which are represented by FIGS. 4-5c. Claim 26 is added herein. Accordingly, claims 1-3, 6, 11-13, 16, 17, 21, 22, and 26 are at issue.

Corrected drawing sheets are filed herewith to address the objections to the drawings. In particular, the text on the filed drawings is removed on the corrected drawings.

The informalities noted in the specification are all addressed by amendments to the specification herein.

Claim 22 is amended as suggested in the Action to address the objections thereto.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Claim 1 is amended herein to provide antecedent basis for the phrase "the longitudinal direction."

Claims 1-3, 11-13, 16, 17, 21, and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,906,391 to Weir, et al. Claims 1-3, 6, 11-13, 16, 17, 21, and 22 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by EP 122134 to Jang, et al.

The rejections, as they may apply to the claims presented herein, are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended is directed to an elongate airbag for being inflated along an exterior surface of an elongate pillar of a vehicle. The elongate airbag includes an airbag body having a generally elongate, narrow tubular configuration upon inflation thereof, and an elongate internal space in the airbag body that is inflated upon airbag deployment to extend in a longitudinal direction in the generally narrow, tubular airbag body. The airbag body has at least one material panel that is

formed into an elongate configuration extending in the longitudinal direction about at least a portion of the internal space. At least one panel portion of the one material panel extends in the longitudinal direction in the internal space. The panel portion acts to tether the airbag for limiting inflation thereof in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction and away from the exterior surface of the vehicle pillar. None of the cited art discloses or suggests the elongate airbag of amended claim 1.

Both Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. are directed to side impact airbags for use in the vehicle compartment between the outboard side of a vehicle seat and the adjacent door. As such, these airbags are configured to expand over a large area against the car door and upwardly toward the roof of the car. On the other hand, the claimed airbag herein has a body with a generally elongate, narrow tubular configuration for extending along the exterior surface of a vehicle pillar, such as the A pillar alongside a windshield. While both Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. have internal vented panels that provide a dual chamber side impact airbag, these panels divide the airbag into upper and lower chambers and thus do not extend along the vertical length of the side impact airbags. Thus, these panels are unlike the recited panel portion of the one material panel that extends in the longitudinal direction in the internal space of the airbag body of amended claim 1. Instead, the corresponding panel portions of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. extend transversely to the corresponding vertical, longitudinal direction of the side impact airbags they teach. Accordingly, it is believed that amended claim 1, and claims 2, 3, 6, and 11 which depend cognately therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon references. Further, since claim 1 is generic, it is believed that claims 4, 5, and 7-10 are likewise in condition for allowance.

Claim 12 is directed to an elongate airbag and calls for an airbag body having a generally elongate, narrow tubular configuration upon inflation thereof. The airbag body has an elongate internal space that is inflated upon airbag deployment

to extend in a longitudinal direction in the generally elongate, narrow tubular airbag body. The airbag body further includes at one material panel extending in the longitudinal direction at least partially about the internal space, and at least one elongate tether panel that extends in the longitudinal direction and divides the internal space into at least two elongate chambers that both extend in the longitudinal direction. The tether panel includes a plurality of vent holes spaced longitudinally from each other along the elongate tether panel to allow the two chambers to be in communication for substantially uniform airbag inflation.

As previously discussed, both Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. do not disclose or suggest an airbag body that has a generally elongate, narrow tubular configuration upon inflation thereof as called for in amended claim 12. Further, the tether panels of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. do not extend in the longitudinal direction and further they do not divide the internal space of the airbag body into two chambers that both extend in the longitudinal direction. The corresponding longitudinal direction of the side impact airbags of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. is in the vertical direction, and the tether panels of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. extend horizontally to divide their airbags into upper and lower chambers. In addition, these chambers are not elongate chambers that extend in the longitudinal direction. Claim 12 also requires that the tether panel include vent holes that are spaced longitudinally from each other in the longitudinal direction. By contrast, the corresponding vent holes in Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. are spaced along the tether panel in the horizontal direction and not the vertical longitudinal direction of their airbags. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 12, and claims 13, 16, and 17 which depend cognately therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon references. Further, since claim 12 is generic, it is believed that claims 14, 15, and 18-20 are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 21 is directed to a method of forming an airbag and calls for folding at least one material panel to extend about at least a portion of an airbag internal space

to be inflated with the internal space of the inflated airbag having an elongate configuration extending in a longitudinal direction. Claim 21 further recites tethering the airbag with a portion of the one material panel extending in the longitudinal direction in the airbag internal space to limit inflation thereof in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction. The airbag internal space is divided into at least two elongate chambers extending in the longitudinal direction with the longitudinally extending portion of the one material panel in the airbag internal space. The relied upon references fail to disclose or suggest the method of forming the airbag called for in amended claim 21.

As has been previously discussed, the tether panels of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. do not extend in the corresponding vertical, longitudinal direction in their side impact airbags, as required in amended claim 21. Further, the internal space of the side impact airbags of Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. is not divided into at least two elongate chambers that extend in a corresponding longitudinal direction, i.e. the vertical direction in the Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. airbags. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 21, and claims 22 and 26 which depend therefrom, are allowable over the relied upon references. Further, since claim 21 is generic, it is believed that claims 23-25 are also in condition for allowance.

In addition, added depend claim 26 calls for mounting the airbag to an exterior surface of a pillar of a vehicle for pedestrian protection with tethering of the airbag limiting inflation of the airbag in a direction away from the vehicle pillar. Neither Weir, et al. and Jang, et al. are directed to exterior airbags and thus do not disclose or suggest the exterior airbag mounting as set forth in claim 26. Accordingly, it is believed claim 26 is allowable for this additional reason.

Based on the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-25, and consideration and allowance of claim 26, are respectfully requested.

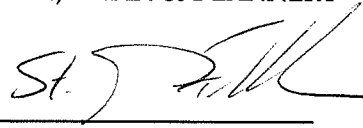
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RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Respectfully submitted,

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